United Nations S/2006/892

Security Council

Distr.: General
15 November 2006

Original: English

Letter dated 15 November 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to resolution 1711 (2006) of 29 September 2006, by which the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) until 15 February 2007. By that resolution, the Security Council took note of the recommendation, contained in my report of 21 September 2006 (S/2006/759), to temporarily maintain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo until 15 February 2007 the capabilities authorized under resolutions 1669 (2006) and 1692 (2006), namely, a maximum of one infantry battalion, a military hospital and 50 military observers deployed from the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) to MONUC. The Council expressed its intention to re-examine this issue before 31 December 2006 with a view to ensuring that MONUC has adequate capabilities to perform its mandate fully until 15 February 2007.

The 50 military observers deployed under the authorized military strength of ONUB have performed observation tasks related to the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and will be repatriated by 31 December 2006. The troops currently deployed under the authorized military strength of ONUB in MONUC include 916 military personnel, comprising one battalion (India) and one level II field hospital (Jordan), stationed in northern and central Katanga.

Since its deployment in July, the Katanga brigade has helped to stabilize the general situation and build an atmosphere of security in northern and central Katanga where uncontrolled Mayi-Mayi groups, who have resisted demobilization, have been preying on the population. The brigade utilizes mobile operating base operations, compelling the Mayi-Mayi groups to disarm and engage in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

Some 787 of an estimated 3,500 armed Mayi-Mayi elements in the area have disarmed, and some 132,703 internally displaced persons of an estimated total of 239,520 have returned to their communities since the deployment of the additional troops in July 2006.

Despite the progress made so far, the northern and central areas of Katanga continue to face serious security challenges. The financial crisis faced by the Government's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration structures has resulted in the programme for the Mayi-Mayi in Katanga, which began in July, being brought to a virtual standstill. Moreover, unpaid and non-brassaged brigades of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Katanga continue to harass the

06-61821 (E) 161106

local population, causing displacements. The full brassage of these brigades is not expected to be completed before mid-2007.

Should the 916 troops deployed under the authorized strength of ONUB be withdrawn on 31 December 2006, it is most likely that the security situation in northern and central Katanga will worsen, with a consequent negative impact on stability and reductions in returns of internally displaced persons in the province.

In the light of the above, I would request that the Security Council consider a temporary increase in the authorized military strength of MONUC to accommodate the 916 troops whose deployment to the Mission is currently authorized under the ONUB mandate, from 1 January until 15 February 2007, when the current mandate of MONUC expires. The associated costs would be absorbed from existing financial resources in the MONUC budget for 2006-2007. As requested by the Council in resolution 1711 (2006), I intend to present initial proposals to the Security Council by mid-January regarding the MONUC post-elections mandate, including a review of the Mission's military strength for 2007.

I should be grateful if you would bring this request to the urgent attention of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**